

## TAKEN FROM LIFE.

Many years ago, when a boy, I was taken into the office of a big express company. It was in a city of some ten thousand inhabitants, with three banks and as many hotels. It was a thriving place in every way, with prosperous merchants backed up by a sturdy agricultural community.

In those days the express companies did a big business in the merchandise carrying trade. Besides there was considerable currency to handle. It was before the days of express orders. When a person wished to send money he sealed up the same in a package, took the express company's receipt for it, and it was generally carried safely to its destination. If it went astray the express company paid the customer. Not many packages went astray, however.

At the office in which I worked I fulfilled the duties of clerk and driver. That is to say I drove to the station every night and morning to deliver goods to the messenger on the train and to take on a new load consigned to banks, merchants and inhabitants of the town. On these trips I generally carried the "strong box" or hand-sack, in which the money was transferred from office to messenger. The agent trusted me implicitly and I valued his confidence greatly. On my trips to and from the station I was often the custodian of money packages of large amounts. Whenever I delivered such packages to the messenger I took his receipt. He took mine for those consigned to my office.

I had been working at the office for about a year when a strange event occurred. Just before going to meet the east-bound train one morning two bank messengers arrived with three packages "said to contain \$80,000." They were placed in the "strong box," and, putting the keys in my pocket, I drove rapidly away. Just as I arrived at the station the train pulled in. As I had considerable merchandise I handed the keys of the "strong box" to the messenger and told him to help himself while I put the merchandise aboard. Just as I finished, the train pulled out and the messenger returned the keys and receipt book duly signed.

"I have nothing for you," he said, and in an instant the train was speeding away on its eastward journey.

I returned to the office, where I



BODY WAS TAKEN FROM A RIVER, worked until 4 o'clock in the afternoon, when I was due to leave to meet the west-bound train. The agent handed me one money package for that train. Opening the "strong box," which, between trains, was kept in a back room, I was startled to find the three packages that should have gone east on the morning train. I looked at the receipt book again and found that they had been receipted for by the messenger.

When I arrived at the train that night the west-bound messenger asked me if I had heard of Hooper. Hooper was the messenger who had gone east that morning. It seems that he had left the train at some way station. The officials of the company were now making a vigorous search for him.

I informed the messenger that I had delivered my consignment to Hooper and that I noticed nothing strange about his conduct. I might have mentioned the "strong box" incident, but remembered that silence about such matters was one of the injunctions of the company.

When I returned to the office the agent had already been informed of Hooper's strange disappearance. The route agent was there making urgent inquiries, and was informed about the packages in the safe. He questioned me about Hooper's demeanor that morning, and I told him that I had noticed nothing unusual in his manner.

The next day the morning papers gave a full account of Hooper's mysterious disappearance, but not one word about the money. It proved a first-rate sensation, however, without the latter feature. For three days the subject was the theme for gossip. The company denied that he had taken any money.

On the fourth day afterwards Hooper's body was taken from a little river, not far from where he must have left the train. As no marks of violence were found it was decided that he had committed suicide. The coroner's jury returned a verdict in accordance with the indications.

But why had Charley Hooper ended his own life? This question bothered me considerably, even long after I had left the company.

Fifteen years later I learned all the facts. I was stopping at one of the principal hotels in a Michigan city at the time.

One evening, while enjoying my customary smoke in the rotunda, I was surprised by the old route agent. We had not met for several years and nat-

urally our conversation turned to events in which we took a somewhat mutual interest.

"Hooper," he said, "was in bad shape with the company when he ended his life. His stealings ran away up into the thousands. We were hot on his trail just about the time of his death, and would soon have had the evidence to arrest him. He had wealthy relatives in England, who afterwards paid the money to the company in order to remove the stain from the family name."

"The reason that Hooper had left the money in the strong box that morning was this: He had already determined to die by his own hand. He receipted for the money and handed you the keys so that you could take the money and become a rich man. Had you done so, suspicion would never have attached to you. This he knew very well. I have often thought of the struggle you must have had to resist temptation. I do not think you will regret it."

And I never shall.

### LIKE WASHINGTON.

A Great King Who Would Not Tell a Lie.

There was once a little baby boy born in Persia, who was called Cyrus. His grandfather, who was a king, thought that when the boy grew up he would want to be a king himself, so he had the poor little baby carried out into the forest and left there to be eaten by the wild beasts. But a kind-hearted woman was looking after her sheep that day and she found the little baby, which she took home with her. As Cyrus grew into boyhood he seemed in some way different from the other boys around him; and so, whenever they played at soldiers, it was always Cyrus who was general, and whenever they played at kings, it was always Cyrus who was king, and they were his subjects. One day, when he was playing king, he led the other boys on to what we should call an apple-stealing expedition; only, instead of apples, they were pomegranates. They went into the grounds belonging to a poor man, picked a great many pomegranates, and ran away before the owner could catch them. But the next morning the man went to their schoolmaster and told him how much fruit he had lost, begging him to find out which of the boys had stolen it and to punish them severely. One by one the boys were called before the master, but each of them said he knew nothing about the pomegranates. At last Cyrus appeared, and was asked whether he knew anything of the robbery. "I did it," he said at once. "Let me be punished. I was the leader. I can break into an orchard and steal a pomegranate, but I cannot tell a lie. It was all my fault and I am ready to bear the punishment which I deserve for being a thief. As for the others, you must not ask me to name them. I was their king, and am responsible for them."

### OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES.

Teacher—"When little George Washington told the truth about cutting down the cherry tree his father forgave him. Now, Johnny, what lesson does this teach us?"

Johnny—"That we can often avoid trouble by carrying the hatchet."

"Willie," said a mother to her 4-year-old hopeful, "you must not interrupt me when I am talking to the ladies. Wait until we get through, then you can talk." "But, mamma," replied the little fellow, "by the time you get through I'll forget all my talk."

Hostess (to 5-year-old guest)—"Does your father say grace before dinner, Margie?"

Margie—"I don't know. What's grace?"

Hostess—"Why, saying grace is returning thanks for what we have to eat."

Margie—"My pa doesn't have to. He always pays cash for everything we get."

Solomon's wisdom is proverbial, but he probably never attempted to answer childish inquiries.

"Tommy," said a mother to her naughty son, "you must be a better boy or you will never go to heaven."

"And suppose I am real good and go there," said Tommy, "will I have to keep right on being good after I get there?"

A 5-year-old kindergarten pupil was told to write an essay on the cow, and after a long and earnest struggle the following was handed in for criticism: "The cow is a female ox and her children are called calves. The cow has four legs, one on each corner. She also has a tail. If her tail was a leg she would then have five legs. The cow also has two horns, but because why I don't know."

### Mirror for a Piano Back.

One of the hardest things in a room to arrange artistically is the piano now that fashion has decreed that it shall be dragged away from the wall. Many an otherwise perfect apartment has been spoiled by the inartistic arrangement of the piano back. A great aid in overcoming this is a mirror, made the exact width of the piano, and placed flat against its back. On each side narrow curtains may be placed, and the mirror used either as a reflector, or with painting on frame and glass. Palma may be prettily arranged at the foot, to be repeated in the glass surface, or a tiny seat placed there, with cushions of quaint shape and material. With the mirror as a starting point one may have endless varieties of decoration.

## FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

### SOME GOOD STORIES FOR OUR JUNIOR READERS.

The Popcorn Ball—How Susie Set Them Free—Playthings for the Little Ones of China—"Let Us Go In and Take a Drink."

#### The Popcorn Ball.

They were sound asleep in rows and rings. All quiet as quiet could be. But Susie said: "You queer little things, You'll find your feet and you'll find your wings. Tonight when I set you free." Then she opened the door of an airy hall And made them ready to go to the ball.

They had worn their silks out long ago. When the summer days were bright, But now, as they danced in the fire-light glow, Like drops of rain that are changed to snow,

They burst into dazzling white; And they spread their robes till they filled the hall. "Oh, see!" said she, "what a lovely ball!"

They hopped so high and they tripped so true, In the firelight steady and clear, Almost like music it seemed to Susie, "And I think it's a pity," she cried, "don't you?" That they can't possibly hear, You know there was only one ear for them all, And that they lost when they came to the ball.

The pattering ended, the dance was done, And the hall was emptied, too; But that was not the end of the fun. For Susie invited them, every one, To join a candy-stew. How could they refuse when she pressed them all To stay in her popcorn ball.

—Eudora S. Bumstead.

#### A Sea-Fight.

The "killer," Orca gladiator, is a voracious whale, with powerful jaws armed with large, sharp teeth. It is the wolf of the ocean, and two or three killers will attack a sperm whale, and mutilate and kill the huge animal. Mr. DeClen, in his narrative of a whaling voyage, "The Cruise of the Cachalot," describes a fight between a sperm whale and three killers which he saw off the island of Pormosa.

A large bowhead rose near the ship, who seemed indifferent to his proximity. Three killers were attacking him. One leaped high in the air and descended upon the whale's broad back with a crash. Again and again the killer leaped and fell, as if to beat the whale into submission by a succession of heavy blows.

The sea around boiled like a caldron. The worried whale lifted its huge head out of the foaming water. On either side a killer hung to his lips, evidently trying to drag his mouth open. At last the incessant, heavy blows of the leaping killer exhausted the great whale, and three three killers, joining forces, dragged open his cavernous mouth, into which they entered and devoured his tongue. As soon as they had finished their feast they swam away, leaving the whale, helpless and dying, a prey to the whalemen.

On another occasion Mr. Bullen saw a combat between a bull sperm whale and two killers, aided by a huge swordfish. The two killers hung on the whale's flanks, trying to divert his attention from the swordfish's attack. This terrible foe, sixteen feet long, launched himself, like a torpedo, at the most vulnerable part of the whale, where the heart is enclosed by the neck. The whale, indifferent to the killers, kept his eyes on the long fish and received the shock on his head, solid as a block of thirty tons of indurubber.

The blow glanced, and the swordfish rolled over the top of the black head. The whale turned rapidly over, settled in the water, caught the swordfish in its jaws, crunched him, and swallowed the two halves. Then reversing his bulk, he brandished his tail aloft, brought it down on one of the killers, and he became the "killed." The survivor fled, pursued by an avalanche of living, furious flesh. They disappeared; but if that killer survived, he probably never again tackled a sperm whale.

#### Among Wild Birds.

Returning to wild birds, my opportunities have been too limited to enable me to generalize; but the following observations may be not without value to those who try to see in the bird a sentiment and tender being writes a bird fancier in the Chicago Inter Ocean. A few days after the arrival of the spotted flycatcher a pair of them were in a near tree. The male often attempted a song and was evidently following the female. He suddenly went forth on a longer journey than usual, as though for a larger insect, turned and went to the female and in the gentlest manner presented to her the captured insect (which appeared to be of the size of a bee). She took it sedately. Shortly after she received another gift of the same kind. A second pair of flycatchers behaved in precisely the same manner. Last April a male robin gave some food in the same way to its mate. Both birds often used their call note.

Several male chaffinches, before nesting time, gave captured insects to

their intended mates. All these insects were captured in flight. The chaffinches were full of ardor, the males, all a-butter with excitement, following the females and with the cuckoo-like flight, which is one of the bird's sweet signs of love, and repeating the soft love note almost incessantly. On one of the first days of May two willow wrens were busy in a hedge. The male often sang, but was mainly intent on keeping near his companion, who appeared to be a female bird. She was seemingly indifferent to his presence and hunted for insects with all the graceful activity of her species. But she remained in the same spot. The male was greatly excited, his wings lowered and pulsating and his call not prolonged to a scream rather than a chirp. Through the telescope it was evident that she also was trembling a little. Suddenly the male darted forth, returned, and alighted near the other. He then without haste went to her and her beak met his. The incident was so brief that the telescope could not be used; but it was, perhaps, fair to assume that he had found and bestowed a love gift. She accepted it with the same sedateness that the female dytches, chaffinches and robins had exhibited in the like circumstances.

#### Chinese Child's Toys.

Few, indeed, would be their playthings if the Chinese children had to depend on toy shops for them, says Pearson's Weekly. As it is, the hawk is a familiar sight in every Chinese city, and when the children hear the song of a toy seller it is a signal for a rush to the front gates. At a call these men slip the pole from their shoulders and set their baskets on the ground, and there is always a group of children ready to gather around them.

A display of toys carried by one of these toy sellers includes many things familiar besides kites, made in the shape of birds, fish, serpents, dragons and even luminous objects, like bells and houses, will have wind harps fastened on to make them sing while in the air, and will have eyes set loose in their heads, so that when the wind blows the eyes will turn round and look as if they were winking at you.

His paraphernalia also includes a lot of clay moulds of different kinds of animals or fruits or other familiar objects, and for "one cash" you can take your choice.

The seller then opens up the bottom tray in his rear basket and shows a bowl of yellow sweets set over a pan of burning charcoal to keep them soft. He rubs a little flour in the moulds to keep the sweets from sticking, picks up a little of the soft substance, which he works into a cup shape in his fingers, and then draws it out, closing up the hole. One end is drawn out longer than the other and then broken off. He places his lips to the broken place and begins to blow, and the lump slowly swells.

Then he claps the moulds which you have chosen round it, and gives a hard blow, breaks off the stem through which he has been blowing, opens the moulds, dips a little bamboo stick into the soft sugar and touches it to the side of the sweetest figure in the mould, lifts it out and hands it to you on the stick, all in much less time than it takes to tell about it.

#### The First Drink.

Two boys stopped in front of a saloon, and an old man standing near listened to what they said.

"Let's go in and take a drink," said one of them.

"I-I don't think we'd better," said his companion, "my father's terribly opposed to saloons. I don't know what he'd say if he knew I'd been in one, and drank liquor there."

"Just for the fun of the thing, you know," urged his friend. "Of course, we'd stop with one drink. There couldn't be any harm in that."

"My boys," said the old man, coming up to them, "you don't know what you're talking about. If you go in there and take one drink, you're not sure of stopping there. The chances are that you won't, for I tell you—and I know what I'm talking about by a bitter experience—that a fascination about liquor that it takes a strong will to resist after the first taste of it, sometimes. Take the first drink, and the way of the drunkard is open before you. Only those who let liquor entirely alone are safe. I know, for I've been a drunkard a good many years. I expect to be one till I die. I began by taking a drink just as you propose to—'for fun'—but I didn't stop there, you see. Take the advice of a poor old wreck, and that is, never take the first drink."

"You're right," said the boy who had proposed to visit the saloon. "I thank you for your good advice, sir. I say, Tom, let's promise each other never to take the first drink."

"All right," said Tom, and the boys clasped hands on their pledge. "That's a good temperance society to belong to," said the old man. "I wish I'd joined one like it when I was a boy."—Eben E. Rexford.

#### Both Satisfied.

It is seldom that the buyer and seller of a horse are both satisfied, but such an event did once happen. Lord Granville, master of the royal buckhounds, had a lubricious manner. He bought an expensive horse from a dealer named Anderson. Meeting the dealer some time afterward, his lordship said, "Well, Anderson, you know the price was quite extravagant, but I am bound to say the horse was worth it."

"I can assure you, my lord," answered Anderson, with a stiff bow, "your approval is our only profit in the transaction."

## PASTURE AND FARM.

Eleven binders were hauled out of Gatesville one day recently.

Price Stimmons shipped two carloads of fat hogs to Los Angeles, Cal.

Bell weevil are reported as doing some damage in Bee county cotton fields.

D. C. Cogdell of Granbury shipped a carload of hogs to Fort Worth and sold them there.

The wheat and oat crops in Erath county have improved nicely the past two weeks and fair crops are assured.

It is estimated that the cotton acreage of Texas has been reduced this year 7.9 per cent from that of last year.

Increase in oat acreage this year is estimated at 1.5 per cent, wheat has increased 15 per cent and corn 5 per cent.

Sam Davidson of Fort Worth sold a few days ago to Curtis Bros. 3000 2-year-old steers located near Roswell, N. M., to be delivered in September, at \$22.75.

One hundred and fifty persons were engaged a few days ago by Grayson county farmers to chop cotton. Farmers are busily engaged at this occupation in many counties.

Implement dealers at Hillsboro report harvesting machinery in great demand and have and are selling many binders particularly.

Cotton stand is fine in Erath county. Ernest Hines of Ellis county cuts his wheat at night. He says he can do as much work and the atmosphere is cooler.

The crop prospect for Ellis county was never brighter. Cotton choppers are in demand. There is a decrease in cotton acreage, but this is made up in grain, which promises large yields.

The second meeting of the Quadrangle Truck Growers' association was held at Seguin. A constitution and by-laws were adopted and officers elected.

Some farmers around Yukum say that if the weevil develops to any great extent in time to plant any other crop, much cotton in that part of the county will be plowed up and substituted with something else.

Crops in Taylor county were never better at this season of the year. There is a considerable growth of weeds, but they are being thinned out by the farmers. The cotton acreage is about equal to that of last year, while there is an increase of corn and other crops.

Fine rains have fallen around Floydada, and notwithstanding the continued winter and extremely late grass, stock of all kinds is now in fine shape and doing well. Grass was never better at this season of the year.

The war scouring mill commenced work on the spring city at Colorado City with almost 1,000,000 pounds of wool on hand to start with. Five carloads of staple came in from Pecos lately. The price is looking up a little, and sheepmen are feeling better.

Some miscreant entered the large potato patch belonging to Mr. W. H. Sullivan at Flatonia and pulled up and destroyed almost half an acre of potatoes. The Truck Growers association offer \$15 for the arrest of the guilty party or parties.

The stockmen of Crockett county, at a meeting held at Osgood, effected an organization for the extermination of wild animals. Rewards for destroying such animals are to be paid as follows: For each bobo, \$15; bobo cubs up to size of coyote, \$10; gray wolf, \$10; coyote, \$15; panther, \$10; wild cat, \$1.

No cotton is now being cultivated in the Pecos valley, as under a system of irrigation other crops have proved more profitable. Alfalfa, sugar beets and fruit growing, together with cattle raising, form the principal avenues of profit there, and to these may be added the culture of celery and asparagus on a large scale for shipment.

A good, soaking rain in Moore county has been of great benefit to farmers and the acreage of cultivated land in that section is being considerably increased. Cattle are doing well but it is said that the calf crop will be small.

Large shipments of cattle are being made from southwestern Louisiana to Indian Territory. A Vincent and T. D. Woody shipped 600 head from Edgerly to Chickasha, where they will be fed for market next fall.

The straw on farms in the Midlothian country will not be long this year, but the heads are ordinarily large and will yield about fifty bushels per acre. Volunteer oats are in prime condition; are ripening rapidly. Harvesting is commencing.

Joseph F. Green of Ennart returned from the Territory. He found the reports of trouble about losses in Ponca reservation had been exaggerated and says as far as he could learn there is no cause for uneasiness on the part of stockmen.

A trade was consummated whereby E. R. Jackson sold to J. W. Montague of Kansas City and J. W. Howard and A. W. Craunch of St. Louis his ranch in Schleicher, Crockett and Irion counties, 150,000 acres, and about 10,000 cattle.

A man may be in the wrong several times but he seldom, if ever, says: "I ask your forgiveness."

#### SIXTY MILES AN HOUR.

A steam motor car, for use on the railroads, recently made a trial trip, going at the rate of sixty miles an hour. This will probably be as much of a record as the motor car's stomach. It causes indigestion, constipation, nervousness, liver and kidney trouble.

Courting on a porch saves a father a heavy light bill.

The Best Prescription for Chills and Fever is a bottle of GROVE'S TASTEFUL CHINA TONIC. It is simply iron and quinine in a tasteful form. No cure—no pay. Price, 50c.

A girl feels old when first called a woman.

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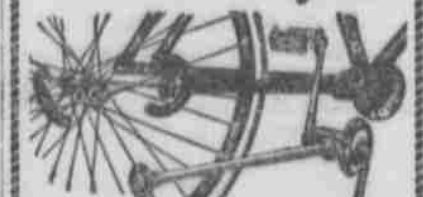


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